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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VILNIUS 000059

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2014
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [LH](#)
SUBJECT: LITHUANIA SAYS YES TO PRT

REF: A. VILNIUS 13
[B](#). 2004 VILNIUS 1196

Classified By: Classified by Pol/Econ Officer Nancy Cohen
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

CONFIDENTIAL

SIPDIS
PROG 01/18/2005
AMB: SDMULL
POL/ECON:NACOHEN
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AMEMBASSY VILNIUS
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY
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STATE FOR EUR/NB AND EUR/RPM

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [LH](#)
SUBJECT: LITHUANIA: CONDITIONAL YES ON PRT

REF: A. VILNIUS 13
[B](#). 2004 VILNIUS 1196
[C](#). STATE 2743
[D](#). ANDERSON-KELLY EMAIL, 1/4/05

Classified By: POL/ECON OFFICER NANCY COHEN FOR REASONS 1.4
(B) AND (D).

Summary

[1](#). (C) The GOL informed the Ambassador on the evening of January 18 that it will accept NATO's request for it to head a provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in western Afghanistan. The decision followed weeks of intensive Mission and USG efforts to get Lithuania on board, culminating in two separate meetings January 18 between the Ambassador and Parliament Speaker Arturas Paulauskas and Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas. Reflecting GOL concern about the cost and technical requirements involved, we expect that the GOL assent will come with some questions and with requests for follow-up on technical, logistical, diplomatic, and personnel assistance that the U.S. has said it would be willing to offer to a Lithuanian-led PRT (refs c and d). End Summary.

Political Will Strong, Budget Less So

[2](#). (C) The Ambassador followed up on earlier meetings and the visit of SACEUR General James L. Jones (septel) to address Lithuania's concerns about leading a provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in western Afghanistan. In a series of meetings with Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas, Parliament Speaker Arturas Paulauskas, and Under Secretaries of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense, the Ambassador underscored that importance and value to NATO of a Lithuanian contribution, drawing on Jones's remarks to President Valdas Adamkus during the SACEUR's recent visit to Lithuania. The Ambassador highlighted the political and military benefits to accrue from preparing for and leading a PRT, including advancing Lithuania's military transformation goals and enhancing the country's stature and military leadership within NATO and the European Union.

[3](#). (C) Responding to the GOL's concerns about its ability to realize PRT objectives on its own, the Ambassador reiterated Jones's assurances of EUCOM and NATO support and the USG commitments (refs c and d) to help Lithuania seek additional international contributions. He encouraged the GOL to inform NATO of Lithuania's intent (albeit provisional) to lead a PRT. On the evening of January 18, a senior MOD official informed the Ambassador on behalf of Defense Minister Kirkilas of the GOL's decision to move forward with the PRT.

Basic Design/Basic Needs

14. (C) Topping GOL concerns are Lithuania's lack of resources and lack of experience. The Prime Minister emphasized that the GOL could only approve a PRT plan that requires no additional budget appropriations. (Note: Lithuania is at the beginning of a two-year period of fiscal discipline as it prepares for acceptance in the Eurozone in 2007. End note). With authorization and appropriations in hand to support only up to 70 personnel resources in Afghanistan, the GOL needed assurances that it could successfully meet PRT objectives -- in effect, on a shoestring.

15. (C) Speaker of Parliament Arturas Paulauskas told the Ambassador that the National Security Council had initially harbored reservations about the idea of Lithuania contributing to the PRT. Council members' reservations, he explained, had reflected both misconceptions about the nature of the "reconstruction" objectives and concerns about the availability of resources. The current understanding -- that the PRT would take on responsibility for security and play a role in political coordination, rather than building the region's decimated economy from scratch -- has resolved members' concerns.

16. (C) Kestutis Jankauskas, recently returned from a UK-sponsored trip to existing PRTs in Afghanistan, described a basic plan that would not stretch the budget. The GOL would pattern its approach to the PRT along the lines of the British model. The security sector would be the main PRT priority, Jankauskas said, and current thinking is that the team could manage with a total complement of between 83-90, including the Lithuanian complement of as many as 70 in the mix. Norkus, elaborating on military concerns, said that Lithuania would need a partner to provide strategic lift. The MOD would need assurances of the availability of language resources on the ground and would require training assistance to enhance intelligence capabilities. They would also look for USG approval of Lithuania's outstanding request to purchase special equipment, including encrypted radios and night-vision goggles. Jankauskas added to the list costs of delivery of food and water and provision of medical care and transport.

17. (C) Prime Minister Brazauskas focused on another issue -- the question of the term of this commitment. He told the Ambassador that Lithuania will need more clarity on how long the PRT mission is likely to last. He also emphasized the need for a clear understanding about the provision and financing of health and medical care, training, transport, and necessary infrastructure development -- responsibilities that Lithuania would not be able to assume. Cekuolis mentioned the need for a significant public diplomacy effort to overcome the lingering unpleasant memory among the Lithuanian public of the forced service of Lithuanian troops in Afghanistan during the Soviet era.

Comment

18. (C) The political will is strong to carry out this mission, but this small ally will need our help. Lithuania will look to the USG to follow through on our promises for support (refs c and d). We expect the Lithuanian government will reply to NATO this week with its provisional assent, giving us the opportunity to begin a discussion on whether we can translate Lithuania's strong political will to assume this task into reality on the ground.
MULL